

Dear Chairman Powell and Commissioners,

For better or for worse, a vast number of American citizens obtain most of their information on political issues from television broadcasts. However, the four major networks devote distressingly little time to coverage of real campaign issues, concentrating mainly on the "horse race" aspects of elections, "gotcha moments" involving goofs by candidates, and airing of attacks by one side or another with no attempt to authenticate the charges or respond to obvious lies.

It's not surprising that large numbers of Americans actually get most of their information on candidates and issues from paid advertising or late-night comedy shows. However, this situation is not acceptable if America is to remain a functioning democracy.

It is well past time that broadcasters make at least some token payment for their use (and abuse) of public airways by donating time for unbiased coverage of important issues and candidate views on both the local and national level. Because broadcasters have been unwilling to donate any time to such unpaid programming, it is up to the FCC to ensure that they meet some minimum standards such as a few hours a week of public-interest programming in time slots accessible to most viewers.

A viable democracy demands that citizens have access to a diversity of opinions and voices on issues vital to their safety and economic well-being.

Sincerely,

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